

REMARKS

1. Amendments

Claims 1 and 17 are amended to define the source of the hydrocarbon feed that is to be catalytically dewaxed as being obtained by the vacuum distillation of an atmospheric residue. Claims 1 and 17 are further amended to specifically require that the hydrocarbon feed is not hydrotreated to reduce sulfur and nitrogen content prior to catalytic dewaxing.

Support for the hydrocarbon feed source limitation is found in the specification at page 4, lines 22-33.

Support for the negative limitation that the hydrocarbon feed to the claimed catalytic dewaxing step is not to be hydrotreated is found in the specification at page 5, lines 29-33.

Claim 13 is canceled.

2. § 103 Rejection of Claims 1, 3-11, and 13-15 Over WO 98/01515 to Moureaux.

The Examiner has rejected claims 1, 3-11, and 13-15 under 35 U.S.C.103(a) as being obvious over WO 98/01515 to Moureaux. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

The discussion and arguments presented in Applicants' previous response with respect to this rejection are incorporated herein by reference.

Independent claims 1 and 13 have been amended to specifically express that the hydrocarbon oil feed is not subjected to a hydrotreatment step to reduce the sulfur content prior to the catalytic dewaxing step. As expressed in Applicants' specification, one significance of this limitation is that the inventive process can catalytically dewax a vacuum distillate feedstock having a high sulfur concentration without an excessive rate of decline of catalytic activity thus eliminating the need for hydrotreating the high sulfur content vacuum distillate feedstock. See e.g. page 3, line 5-9, 20-23; page 4, line 17-22; and page 5, line 13 – page 6, line 6.

The Examiner argues that there is no exclusion of an additional hydrotreating step expressed in Applicants' previously presented claims. The amendments to independent claims 1 and 13 as presented and discussed above provide for the exclusion of a step to hydrotreat a vacuum distillate having a high sulfur concentration prior to catalytically dewaxing it.

Another amendment to the independent claims provides language that defines the source of the hydrocarbon oil feed to be a vacuum distillate. The requirement that the hydrocarbon oil feed have a high sulfur concentration is maintained. This feedstock, however, as discussed above, is not hydrotreated prior to being subjected to catalytic dewaxing. One of the reasons the recited feedstock is different from those taught in the prior art is that the prior art teaches away from the catalytic dewaxing of a feedstock having a high sulfur concentration. The claimed feedstock is different from the prior art feedstocks because of its high sulfur concentration.

It is respectfully asserted that in light of the above-discussed amendments to independent claims 1 and 13 and the arguments presented herein and in the previous response, claims 1, 3-11 and 13-15 now pending in this application are patentable over the prior art. Early allowance of these claims is therefore respectfully requested.

3. § 103 Rejection of Claim 12 Over WO 98/01515 to Moureaux in View of U.S. 4,743,354 to Ward

The Examiner has rejected claim 12 under 35 U.S.C.103(a) as being obvious over WO 98/01515 to Moureaux in view of U.S. 4,743,354 to Ward. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

The discussion and arguments presented in Applicants' previous response with respect to this rejection are incorporated herein by reference.

Considering the amendments to the independent claims and the arguments presented above, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 12 is patentable over the prior art. Early allowance of claim 12 is therefore respectfully requested.

4. § 103 Rejection of Claim 16 Over WO 98/01515 to Moureaux in View of U.S. 4,867,861 to Abdo et al

The Examiner has rejected claim 16 under 35 U.S.C.103(a) as being obvious over WO 98/01515 to Moureaux in view of U.S. 4,867,861 to Abdo et al. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

The discussion and arguments presented in Applicants' previous response with respect to this rejection are incorporated herein by reference.

Considering the amendments to the independent claims and the arguments presented above, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 16 is patentable over the prior art. Early allowance of claim 16 is therefore respectfully requested.

5. § 103 Rejection of Claim 17-25 Over WO 98/01515 to Moureaux in View of U.S. 4,867,861 to Abdo et al

The Examiner has rejected claims 17-25 under 35 U.S.C.103(a) as being obvious over WO 98/01515 to Moureaux in view of U.S. 4,867,861 to Abdo et al. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

The discussion and arguments presented in Applicants' previous response with respect to this rejection are incorporated herein by reference.


Considering the amendments to the independent claims and the arguments presented above, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 17-25 are patentable over the prior art. Early allowance of claim 17-25 is therefore respectfully requested.

6. Conclusion

In view of the above remarks, Applicants respectfully assert that the claims now pending in this application are in a condition for allowance.

Respectfully submitted,

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